

## Second Track Will Reduce Travel Time Across All of New York; Progress Also Announced for Projects in the Capital Region

WASHINGTON - Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28), Founder and Co-Chair of the Bicameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus, today announced that the long-awaited double track project in between Albany and Schenectady will begin construction in the spring finally relieving congestion and reducing travel time for rail passengers across the Empire Corridor. Also announced today is funding for the construction of a fourth track at Rensselaer, track improvements between Albany and Poughkeepsie and improvements at the Schenectady rail station.

Today Slaughter announced that \$149.3 million awarded to New York State as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has been obligated and is on its way to the state Department of Transportation allowing construction to move forward.

"We've been talking about the congestion in Albany for the better part of 20 years and today, finally, thanks to federal funding and the work my office has done with the New York Department of Transportation, Amtrak and the Federal Railroad Administration, we can announce that construction will begin next season. I also want to acknowledge CSX's efforts and look forward to a new era of cooperation," said Slaughter.

"This is monumental progress for rail in New York and won't just benefit those residents in Albany. For years trains traveling across the state have been delayed because of the congestion caused in these 20 miles. Passenger rail service will be more reliable everywhere along the Empire Corridor and that's good news for everyone from Buffalo to Boston. Now the only thing standing in our way from construction is some snow and we Upstaters can handle that."

In January 2010, Slaughter announced \$151 million was awarded to New York State as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Today's announcement of \$149.3 million being obligated protects the funding from House Republican-lead attacks to repeal any monies not yet transferred to state governments.

\$91.2 million will go towards the second track construction and an additional \$58.1 million will help the following projects move forward: construction of a fourth track at Rensselaer, track improvements between Albany and Poughkeepsie and improvements at the Schenectady rail station.

More details on each project are included below.

Slaughter is New York's leading advocate fighting to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York. In total, New York has received \$456.4 million for improved rail and high-speed rail projects thanks to her advocacy.

In 2009, she founded the Upstate [Congressional Caucus and last March founded the Bicameral High-Speed & Intercity Passenger Rail Caucus](#), a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers that serves as the leading voice for high-speed and passenger rail program funding. For more Slaughter's work to bring high-speed rail to Upstate New York, [click here](#).

### ***More on the Projects Moving Forward With Today's Announcement***

#### **Albany - Schenectady Second Main Track -- \$91.2 million**

New York was awarded \$91.2 million to reduce approximately 18 minutes of delay at the existing bottleneck located between the Schenectady and Albany-Rensselaer stations between MP QC 143.3 and MP QC 160.3 in Albany and Schenectady Counties.

The project includes improving grade crossings within the project area by upgrading existing

warning device systems to include warning signs, automatic flashers, gates and predictors at Lincoln Avenue, Morris Road, and Cordell Rd crossings in Colonie.

Since there were multiple tracks in this section of the corridor previously, the proposed work is entirely within the railroad Right of Way, and no use of public lands is needed. Freight traffic on this section of the corridor is minimal, CSX Transportation runs one round trip train a day and Canadian Pacific runs 1 one-way train trip per day.

### **Albany-Rensselaer and Schenectady Fourth Track/Station Improvements - \$58.1 million**

Overall benefits for this project include increased schedule reliability, reduced congestion and interference between freight and passenger trains, and increased capacity and efficiency, resulting in less delay and improved intercity passenger rail operations in this segment of the Empire Corridor. The project benefits also include increased ridership as well as increased frequency of Amtrak service to the Schenectady Station, improved timeliness of rail service, and improved overall quality of passenger experience, all of which provide an outlet for increased modal transit choice. There are three elements to the project:

**Section 1 – Albany-Rensselaer Fourth Station Track** – Section 1 of this project is currently being progressed with an existing FRA grant for final design. The Conceptual Operating Plan and the preliminary track layout have been approved by the FRA, and a conceptual construction staging plan has been submitted to stakeholders and the FRA for review and approval. The major components of this project are track and platform improvements and signal work. The project is located at the Albany-Rensselaer Station in the City of Rensselaer, NY. The project will benefit Empire corridor Service, with end points of New York City and Niagara Falls, NY, which serves major locations including upstate cities such as Buffalo, Rochester and Syracuse. This project also includes improved service for the Lake Shore Limited (NYC/Boston to Chicago), Maple Leaf (NYC to Toronto), Adirondack (NYC to Montreal), and Ethan Allen (NYC to Rutland, VT) trains. There are currently thirteen passenger roundtrips between New York and Albany, four of which extend west of Albany to Buffalo and points west, one of which that extends north to Montreal, and one of which that extends north to Rutland, VT. In addition, there is one daily roundtrip between Albany and Boston.

**Section 2 – Hudson Line Signal Wire Relocation (Phase 2)** – Section 2 of this project relocates the signal wires underground and connects with Phase 1 of the signal wire relocation (which was selected for funding under the FY2010 HSIPR program) to the southern terminus of the Albany-Rensselaer Fourth Station Track project. Signal outages from the existing above ground signal wires lead to train delay, a reduction in average operating speed over the line, degradation in Amtrak on-time performance and a reduction in the train capacity of the line. Twenty-four percent of delays on this segment of the Hudson Line are due to outages associated with the above ground signals. Operating safety is reduced by the occurrences of signal outages. In addition, signal system maintenance and repair costs are increased and schedule reliability and locomotive fuel efficiency are reduced due to signal outages.

With the signal improvements associated with this project in place, signal work for the Albany-Rensselaer Fourth Station Track can be effectively tied into the new signal system being constructed as a part of the FRA FY2010 funded signal relocation on the Hudson Line (Phase 1), without the need for either project to tie into the antiquated existing signal system. This Section may also be mobilized at the same time as Phase 1, to be implemented under a separate FRA cooperative agreement.

**Section 3 - Schenectady Station Platform and Track Improvements** – Section 3 of this project provides a new platform and new track layout at Schenectady Station, located at 332 Erie Boulevard, Schenectady NY. The construction includes: track and platform replacement, waterproofing track deck and platform under track, construction of the northern stairwell, and the infrastructure for the south stairwell and elevator associated with the platform. This Project element will improve structural integrity of the track platforms over the viaduct.

This Project element will play into a larger scope of the revitalization of Schenectady Station and downtown Schenectady, while promoting ridership for Amtrak's intercity passenger rail service, and providing key linkages to other cities within the Empire Corridor and beyond. The revitalized station will support high speed rail service within the Empire Corridor, improve Amtrak on-time performance, increase ridership, and allow for future frequency increases of Amtrak service.

PUBLISHED FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23